



### Midlands Digital Conference - Connecting ideas, delivering innovation, in partnership with HSBC UK

The digital conference on 18 January was a virtual event which convened influential Midlands Engine partnership voices from business, academia and the public sector to explore how to successfully implement a digital connectivity strategy across a local authority area.

The morning session brought insights from Sir John Peace and Julia Lopez MP Minister of State at the Department for Digital, Media and Sport. This was followed by a Panel discussion chaired by Mark Stansfeld, WM5G and included: Matt Agar, DCMS; Heather Clark, City of Wolverhampton; Ceren Clulow, Nottinghamshire CC; Leigh Hunt, Regional Partnership Director, City Fibre and Kasam Hussain, Regional Partnership Director, Openreach. Rhys Enfield finished over the morning session by sharing insights from the Digital Connectivity map.

In the afternoon there were nine workshops, exploring everything from financing digital adoption to the transformational benefits and practicalities of new technologies.

### Regional Economic Impact Monitor: Deep Dive on Digital

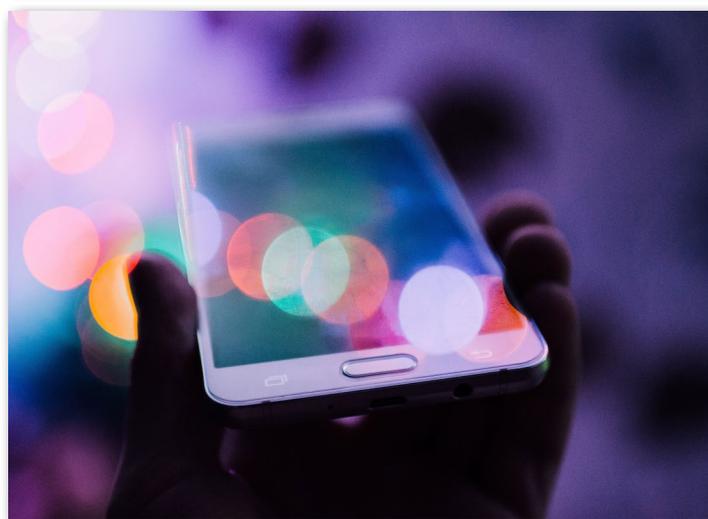
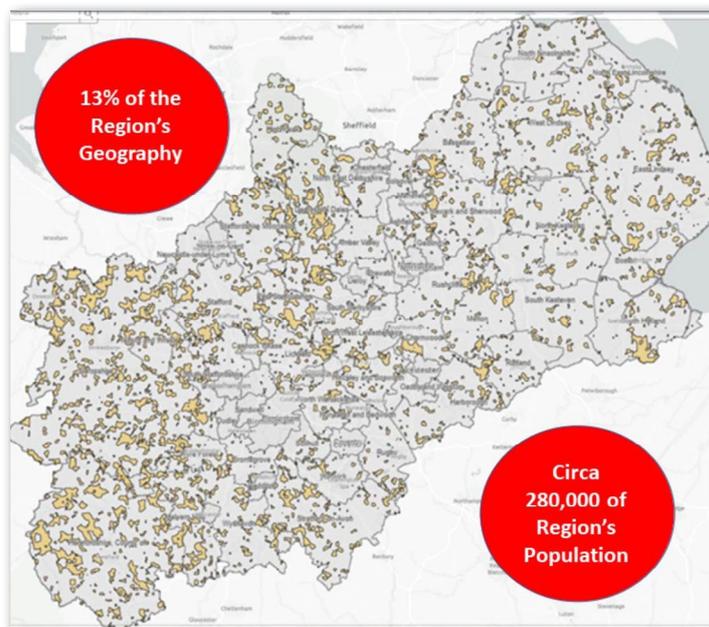
Digital is recognised as a critical enabler across all workstreams of the Midlands Engine partnership, reflecting its role as a key factor in the future success of the regional economy.

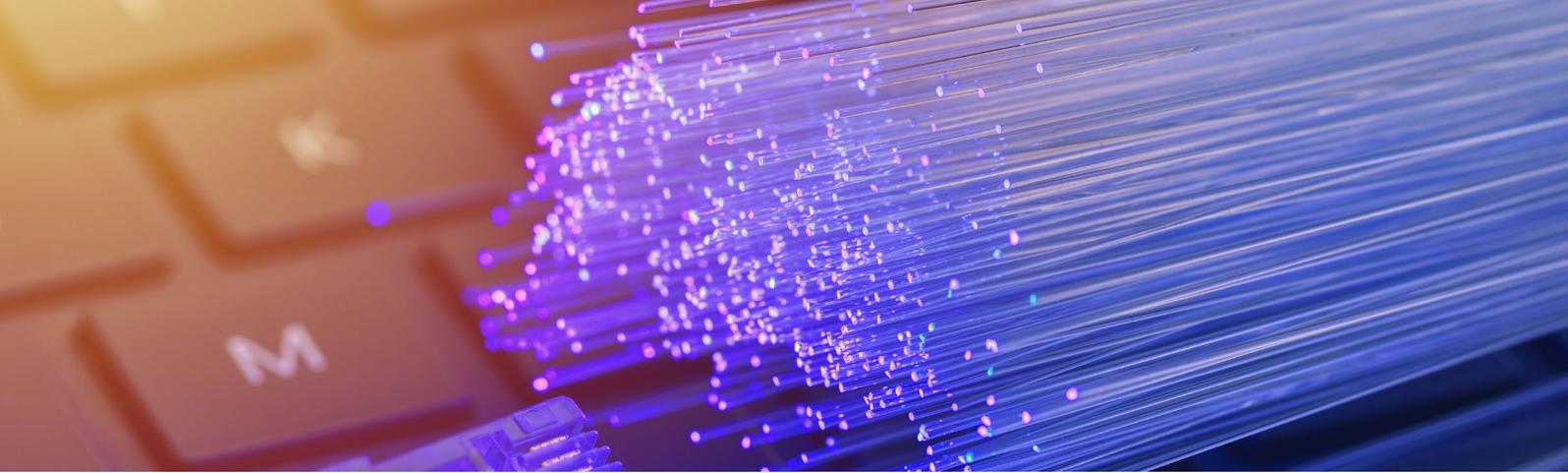
The deep dive is intended to stimulate debate and discussion on possible solutions or actions to take, support decision-making and drive momentum on the digital policy area. It is hoped that these discussions will building on existing work across the region and catalysing further collaboration within different sectors of the Midlands Engine economy.

### Midlands Engine Digital Connected Map

Our regional connected map, highlighting connectivity hot-spots and not-spots – and more, is being used by regional partners to provide evidence to senior leaders, partners and businesses on the status of infrastructure and the developments that are required to drive improvement.

The scale and power of the map can now be seen by accessing a video that demonstrates the huge potential that the map can offer. This can be accessed via this link '[Click here](#)'.





## Digital Connectivity Infrastructure Accelerator (DCIA)

The DCIA Pilot was an open competition, requiring submissions from Regional or Local Authorities, run by DCMS from HM Treasury's Shared Outcomes Fund and supported by DfT. DCIA will allocate up to £4 million of funding to pilots which support the implementation of digital asset management solutions for mapping and brokerage of publicly owned assets for use in the rollout of wireless communication networks.

Two bids were submitted by the region, and a successful bid has been announced for WMCA. They will work with cross regional partners to ensure that the lessons learnt from this crucial piece of work are shared with partners as it progresses over the course of the year.

Potential outputs include:

- Testing the process required to digitise elements of the site acquisition process.
- Building evidence of whether the use of a digital asset management platform enables more efficient industry access to public sector assets.
- Assessing the potential commercial models and economic viability of running a digital asset management platform.
- Increasing expertise and reach an understanding of what resource is required to expedite telecommunications infrastructure deployment.
- Demonstrating the application of a digital asset management mapping platform across a diverse range of geographies and socio-economic profiles.
- Demonstrating that the platform has been tested with multiple asset types.

## GigaHubs

GigaHubs is one of the products BDUK is using to deliver the government ambition of gigabit capabilities across the UK by 2030. As part of the wider Project Gigabit, GigaHubs will use up to £110 million to connect public buildings such as rural schools, doctors' surgeries and libraries to gigabit broadband. This will help GPs provide remote video consultations and allow whole classes of schoolchildren to be online, at once, with no interruptions.

ME has been approached by DCMS to explore a regional approach to GigaHubs that will accelerate delivery and reduce the administrative burden to local areas.

BDUK has provided a list of 519 potential sites across the region, and the team are currently working with Councils to confirm the scope and scale of the project.

Nottinghamshire County Council have agreed to lead the procurement process on behalf of the partnership.

